

To: Mayor and City Council
Cc: John Szerlag, City Manager
Lori Grigg Bluhm, City Attorney
From: Robin Beltramini, Council Member
Subject: SEMCOG meeting, October 23, 2001
Date: October 29, 2001

The General Assembly Meeting of the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments was held at the St. John's Golf and Conference Center in Plymouth. The converted seminary made a very interesting site for the workshops and meetings. Many of the delegates and other attendees were the same people who had attended MML in September. So, for me, it seemed familiar, while being new.

Registration: While not usually a subject on which to report, this is entered as a reminder. At our regular meeting on July 23, we assigned "delegate" status to me and held off designating an alternate. However, we still have not assigned, and communicated an alternate. SEMCOG will recognize only Larry Keisling as the alternate unless we send them a copy of a new resolution. We need to take care of this as soon as possible.

Joint Public Services Workshop: This was an overview of the award-winning joint public service projects as decided by the Joint Public Services Awards Advisory Council. There were three categories for entries: Outstanding Leadership in Joint Public Services; Outstanding Joint Public Services Project; Outstanding Public/Private Partnership.

Outstanding Leadership in Joint Public Services Award was presented to Ted Wahby, "the driving force behind the Lake St. Clair Clean Water Initiative Project." The project started with a study of retention basins following the numerous 1994 closings of beaches and recreational facilities along the lake. In 1999 a list of necessary improvements was submitted to the Southeast Macomb Sanitary District (SEMSD). Since this is a district encompassing the cities of Eastpointe, Roseville, and St. Clair Shores huge cooperative agreements of ownership, operation, and maintenance had to be devised, as well as the coordination of efforts of MDEQ.

MDOT, Macomb County Office of Public Works, and three different engineering firms. Eventually all agreed to work, and spend, toward the common goal of minimizing excess water in the sewer system and eliminating combined sewer overflows into the lake. The project is to be completed in 2003.

- Biggest challenge was getting all agencies on board and to agree to appropriate allocation of costs.
- County role was primarily bonding capability (for rating) and to assist in influencing neighboring communities, particularly those outside Macomb County, to upgrade their systems so as to not degrade the work of this project. This is a continuing effort.
- Funding for the project was through the state revolving fund (\$44 of the \$65 million) and by municipality (decided through a percent of consumption calculation with overages billed at a flat rate).
- Residents of the three communities are already benefiting—downspout program and cleaning of interceptors preceded the project. And, with cooperation of neighboring communities, Lake St. Clair can be fully recreational in 2003.
- Project was necessitated by the state requirements (and forthcoming federal requirements) regarding storm water pollutants and the need for SEMSD to remove storm pumps.

Outstanding Joint Public Services Project Award was presented to the Chelsea Area Planning Team for their creation of a regional land use master plan. The project took over two years and encompassed issues of common land use plan districts, affordable housing, and the provision of sewer and water services. Partners in the plan were: Washtenaw County Planning Dept.; Chelsea Chamber of Commerce; Chelsea School District; Village of Chelsea; Dexter, Lima, Lyndon, and Sylvan Townships.

- County gave technical planning assistance to communities that could not afford it on their own.
- Project created a dialogue with citizens of the entire area.
- Communication and collaboration on issues of multi-jurisdictional impact, efficient provision of public services and land use has resulted.
- Participants relayed that it would be helpful for the state legislature to encourage, or reward (in some way "sanction"), these sorts of plans. Home Rule makes such coordinated, multi-jurisdictional efforts difficult to ratify/adopt at the local level. In fact, getting all to adopt the plan, formally, has been the

biggest challenge of the project, since the repercussions of the plan can limit creativity or development if viewed with a strictly parochial eye rather than through the wide-angle lens of area vision.

- As an example of coordinated/area-wide land use, this plan allowed for “specialty housing” such as manufactured homes to be provided in a single location rather than somewhere in each jurisdiction.

Outstanding Public/Private Partnership Award was given to two projects.

The AAA Road Improvement Demonstration Project began in Detroit in the fall of 1996. It was designed to help reduce auto insurance rates in the city. The project targets high-crash locations, performs a safety analysis, and devises relatively inexpensive engineering modifications. The steering committee consists of representatives from the City of Detroit, AAA Michigan, Wayne County Road Commission, MDOT, Wayne State University, Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning, and SEMCOG. The committee’s main task was to approve locations and improvements, discuss funding agreements, and oversee construction planning.

- By the end of 2002 more than 150 intersections will be completed as part of the project in Detroit.
- Private dollars are contributing to the road improvements.
- The greatest hurdle in getting the project started was to get the government agencies to agree to heavily participate in a project led by private industry.
- The actual safety results of the first 40 intersections are being analyzed now.
- The project is being replicated in Grand Rapids. If the Detroit analysis proves the hypothesis and if the Grand Rapids project proceeds smoothly, AAA will talk to other municipalities about problem intersections.
- Since Troy has a few of the most lethal intersections in the county, I was interested to know if there was a minimum number (of anything) to participate in such a project. Currently, there is not. However, some area-wide coordination could enhance chances for a project.

Carver Subdivision Revitalization Program received the other public/private partnership award. This area within the City of Westland has been geographically separated from the rest of the community, is older, is in the flight pattern of Metro Airport, has a higher incidence of crime than the rest of the community, and generally, was not improving Westland’s reputation, or housing/living stock. The collaboration

to improve the area consisted of the City of Westland, U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, the Southeast Homeowners' Association, Peoples' Community Baptist Church, Peoples' Community Hope for Homes (PCHFH), Michigan State Housing Development Authority, and Bank One.

- The goals of the project were to "reconnect" the area with the rest of Westland; enhance safety and neighborhood aesthetics; and encourage new residential growth.
- Deteriorated structures were removed, infrastructure renovated, new homes built, neighborhood entities involved (for "ownership" of efforts).
- Bank One provided attractive financing packages from the beginning. Two other financial institutions have since joined the effort.
- Social and public services programs and development of a charter school proximate to the neighborhood are just a few of the "unintended" positive consequences.
- Overall, public, private, and nonprofit organizations working together are bringing renewed growth and stability to Carver Subdivision.

City/Township Bloc Caucus meeting: The first item of real business was to elect a delegate and alternate to the Transportation Improvement Program Development Committee (TIPDC). The current delegate, William Roberts, Mayor of Walled Lake, and current alternate, S.A. Trudy Swanson, Mayor Pro Tem of Ypsilanti were re-elected.

During the period for open discussion, Tom Barwin, City Manager, Ferndale, floated the idea that a cabinet level position should be created at the state level to assist in managing smart growth and urban affairs. A lively discussion followed. Vicki Barnett, Council Member Farmington Hills, pointed out that tax policies might be a better starting point. PA 198 isn't really doing the job as designed. The policies are based on population and community redevelopment success instead of a combination of population and impact or some similar criterion. Mike McDonald, Mayor of Wixom, pointed out that better city attitude toward business and business retention would make this a moot point. Dante Lanzetta, Mayor of Birmingham, and Paul Tait, Executive Director of SEMCOG both cautioned the discussants to be careful what was wished for, given past practices of the Engler administration, and the fact that state administration is about to change. There was also some discussion

regarding revenue sharing cuts in the state budget in order to balance—generated more by the state deficit and need to balance than by any major downturn in economics. In the end, the caucus recommended that a review of smart growth initiatives, decay in urban growth, and its root causes be undertaken by the SEMCOG Community and Economic Development Advisory Council. Report to be provided at the March General Assembly meeting.

General Assembly Meeting:

Chairman's report on Bloc Caucus Elections included the report from the County Bloc that Chuck Moss is their rep to the TIPDC. Regional Ambassador Award was presented to Greg Pitoniak, Mayor of Taylor, for his work with the Transportation Advisory Council.

Houskeeping details included approval of June 28, 2001 Meeting Minutes; receipt of financial statements; printed progress reports from Community and Economic Development Advisory Council and the Environmental Policy Advisory Council.

Action item: *Regional Transit Plan for Southeast Michigan*—resolution carried.

- Four tiered plan: Tier 1—Rapid Transit, 12 corridors, 259 miles, 265 stations, preliminary assessment shows bus rapid transit as most cost effective with features similar to rail, but runs on the road, and could be converted to rail in the future; Tier 2—Fixed Route Bus Service, more frequent and longer service with added locations; Tier 3—Community Transit, expands and improves on the existing service; Tier 4—Regional Links, express bus and passenger rail to areas as far flung as Lansing and Port Huron.
- Governance is a continuing unsolved issue. A regional transportation authority will have to be created. Enabling state legislation is underway.
- Funding is unresolved. The system will take \$2 billion over 25 years to build plus \$200 million in annual costs to run—all new costs. Funding is possible through: federal capital funds, requiring a local match; local operating capital (already estimated as a threefold increase in five years); and some sort of taxing mechanism—sales, property, vehicle registration, business, etc. None of these has been fully explored. However, the point must be made that this is government, and no funding can be decided until a plan is approved.

- One of the points made during the public comments was that we, as a region, are currently losing businesses, jobs, and workers to areas that do have mass transit systems. This is becoming an overriding economic viability issue.

Action item: *Amendments to the 2025 Regional Transportation Plan for Southeast Michigan*—resolution to adopt carried.

- Nine specific projects were added to the plan.
- Total change in funding is + \$31.5 million.
- It must also be noted that during the public comment section here, there was a Brighton resident who had surveyed his neighbors who all agreed that they did not want interstate interchange improvements near their homes, because traffic may increase in their rural area.

Action item: *2030 Regional Development Forecast*—resolution to adopt carried.

- Forecast shows the region experiencing steady and moderate growth over the next 29 years.
- Traditionally, SEMCOG has very impressive prediction correlations. The five year summary last time was off by less than .5% and the 2000 prediction varied from the actual census numbers by less than one percent.
- Job growth will be constrained by the age of workers more than by the expansion, or lack of expansion, of jobs.
- Basic 2030 predictions are: population will grow approximately 12%, but households will increase about 21%, and job growth will increase by 16%.
 - Troy's population is expected to decrease by 4% while households increase by 8.7%, and employment increases by 7.4%.

Report from the Executive Director, Paul Tait

- Basement flooding—Michigan State Supreme Court is deciding the case against the downriver communities right now. SEMCOG is lobbying for a legislative definition of when local government is liable. Both the court and the legislature seem receptive to the arguments made that if a municipality has done all that is reasonable to prevent such flooding, the municipality cannot be held fully responsible for damages. Further persuasion is being offered to limit the relief to the property owner.
- Sanitary sewer overflows—MDEQ is beginning to recognize the differences in depth of problem and cost effectiveness of various "fix" scenarios.

Historically, all violations/overflows have been subjected to the same evaluative criteria and remedies. This appears to be changing.

- Michigan State Auditor General is reviewing the sewer cost study prepared by SEMCOG. Indications are that SEMCOG's methodology may be adopted.
- Manufactured Housing legislation is moving. However, there are currently more than 50 bills introduced. Herculean efforts are being made to salvage the best provisions for local zoning, funding for services, and composition requirements of the housing.

Meeting adjourned to a reception honoring the Taubman Fellows of this year and previous years.